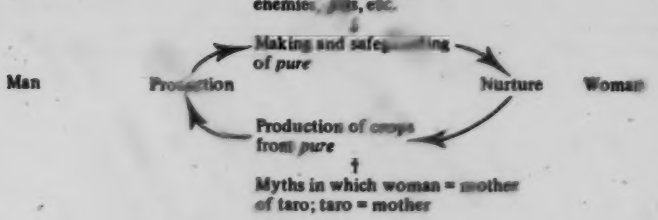
5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

felt to be a feminine thing. In the myths it is the mother who buries the taro shoots (her children) and covers them with leaves and earth which are equated with her body. I shall show this in more detail in the next chapter. 423 241

In Williams' report on the division of labour, planting is shown as a female task, whereas the time studies of Waddell and Krinks suggest that the activity is actually shared by the couple. There is no real contradiction here, nor much evidence of change, as the man's task is to pound holes into the soil with his digging stick whereas the woman does the actual planting, or burying (*kouri*) of the seed. [773] [462]

Unless the normal rules are suspended, as happens at feasting time, men do not harvest taro or other products of the *pure* where taro is planted. (The rules are different for the yam garden as we shall see later.) The explanation that is given of this rule is that only the women know how to harvest crops to best advantage, i.e. at the right time and in the right quantities. If men harvested, the supply would never last through the lean season. The woman is responsible for nurture, in the widest sense. It is her task every day to bring home garden food in the large string bag suspended from her head. Contrary to what white observers have sometimes believed, this is not a symbol of female slavery, but rather of female power and it is done proudly. When my wife started to bring home produce from our own garden in Sivepe (in a different kind of bag), the women crowded round excitedly and congratulated her. The food gifts that are constantly sent from one household to another may be, at least partly, regarded as a display by the women of their own success. The products of the taro garden (though not the yam garden) may ultimately be regarded as a gift from women to men. We may summarise the total transaction as follows: 241 [462] [482] [562] [431] 562 241 773

MODEL 11


Myths of male as killer of enemies, pigs, etc.
Making and safeguarding of *pure*
Man
Protection
Nurture
Woman
Production of crops from *pure*
Myths in which woman = mother of taro; taro = mother

On the basis of such a model, what precisely is the nature of 'rights' in land enjoyed by husbands and wives? A simple analogy would be a jointly owned machine of which one party controls all the bolts and the other controls all the nuts. The assets of neither party have any value independently of the other. Value can be created only by the co-operative *action* of screwing together bolts and nuts. Land transactions between Orokaiva husbands and wives are similarly a sequence of cumulative co-operative actions, such that each move by one party calls forth an appropriate response. The only 'rights' are 'rights' to responses once certain moves have been made. Legal disputes can in practice arise only if 423 593 [578]

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461

(11) The daily routine and duration of activities. As suggested above, both the duration of an individual activity and the time at which it occurs within a given day may have some bearing on the broader patterns of activity. Williams (1930:21-31) describes an individual as characteristically undertaking several tasks within a single day, garden work normally being completed by midday. Table 6:10 reveals the need for modifying this view. The mid-point of most activities falls within the 1100 to 1400 period, and of the 19 extra-village subsistence tasks 13 have a mid-point falling after 1200. The tendency is to leave for the gardens in early or mid-morning, returning to the village in mid-afternoon. In garden work several tasks are normally carried out during a single visit, food being harvested last.

Of the 13 activities with a mean duration exceeding 5.0 hours only 4 - clearing, planting yams, sago-making and mourning - are associated with the subsistence sector. Of the others, 6 concern the marketing of crops, both subsistence and cash, and 1 is paid work. The subsistence tasks occur infrequently while the cash-producing ones are a regular feature of a commercial economy. While the total time devoted to cash-producing activities in Sivepe is small, it would appear disproportionately disruptive of a subsistence routine characterised by the daily pursuit of a large number of tasks of short duration. Significantly, in terms of total time expended, the two most burdensome cash cropping tasks are processing coffee and harvesting rubber. The mid-point of both these occurs early in the morning (0941 and 0838 respectively) and since the activities are of short duration the intention is apparently to complete them before starting the daily subsistence routine.

While the time devoted to cash-producing activities, both in total and proportionately, is slight, the characteristics of their occurrence and duration suggest that areas of potential or actual 'stress' may already exist in terms of the juxtaposition of subsistence and external sectors at this basic level of work organisation.

The allocation of time within individual activities

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[48]
[482]

In a community practising shifting cultivation, where all movement is by foot and all goods are carried on the back, travelling comprises a major component of activity time, therefore significantly affecting the level of productivity. This fact is clearly recognised by the Orokaiva and partially explains village movements. With increasing commercialisation of the economy, the problem of the journey to work becomes more serious on account of the greater volume of goods being handled and increased level of activity.

[491]
[36]

One of the stated aims behind Sivepe's projected move was to be sited on an improved road being built to Sasembata in order that

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 110]

18: Dakeyne K-5 (1962-1964) 1969
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Yega

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[Housewife carrying garden produce and firewood back to her village, a distance of up to four miles. Her load, excluding baby, is about 100 pounds.]

INTRODUCTION

433 THE traditional economy of New Guinea villages was radically different from our own. Whilst our economy is based upon the production of surplus goods which can be sold for profit, thus providing capital which in turn may be invested to produce greater profits, the key note of the New Guinea economy was 433 self-sufficiency. Traditionally, the people of 24 New Guinea were subsistence cultivators plant- [226] ing their food crops in small clearings in the [224] forests and supplementing this food supply by [222] fishing, by hunting the animals which live in the forests and on the grasslands and by gather- [412] ing the edible produce of wild vegetation, [392] notably sago. Only the simplest implements were available: stone axes with which trees could be laboriously felled or ring-barked; fire for burning-off the mass of felled timber, vines, and leaves; and sharpened sticks with which holes were made for planting seeds and cuttings. In only a few limited areas, notably the central highlands of the main island, was there any attempt at digging or cultivating the soil prior to planting; in most areas cuttings or seeds were planted in holes made directly in the cleared, ash-covered ground. [128] The burned clearing thus made and used for the growing of food crops is referred to in this book as a swidden.

433 Such an economy, in which there was no 24 concept of saving and no profit motive, tended 17 to be resistant to change; innovation was un- [412] necessary. But with the coming of white men possessing a superior technology, an important change occurred; steel axes, knives, and spades

P.I-A

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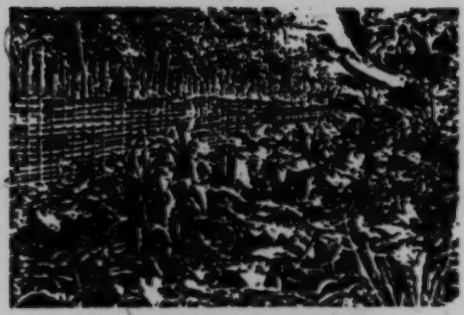

Fig. 6. A Yega swidden. Notice the variety of interplanted crops which here include maize, taro, sugar cane, pineapple, paw paw, and bananas. The fence, built to keep out wild pigs, is about five feet high

241 b) *Fencing.* Most Yega swiddens are fenced, at least partly, against the depredations of wild pigs (Fig. 6). Since fencing is a tedious task, natural features such as steep creek banks are utilized as fully as possible. But frequently one finds a swidden entirely fenced except for a gap left purposely to tempt the pig to enter [224] the garden. A trap is then set, or a hunter takes his stand nearby at night. When the gap is not being used for hunting purposes, a fire [825] is lit or pieces of rag are hung there; pigs scenting human beings will not then enter the garden.

241 c) *Division of labour.* Most garden work is performed by both men and women, but cut- 462 ting large trees is men's work only, and harvesting is performed by women only. Incidentally, [482] the women also carry the loads of vegetables weighing sixty to seventy pounds back to the villages, often three or four miles, sometimes with a load of firewood and a baby on top.

262 d) *Sago production.* Sago is an important supplementary food; it is particularly important as a famine reserve. During an unusually long dry period in 1965 the Yega and their neighbours were reduced to living, for some months, almost exclusively on sago. Production 222 is a tedious process. Sago is a starch which, with fibre, makes up the internal bulk of the

[P.9-B]

affairs, but gives all his declining energies to his garden, keeping as close as possible to the productive level of his better years. He draws closer and closer to his garden where his spirit will dwell after death. Apart from the garden, he becomes remote from most things; his days of household duties, hunting, fishing, building are over. He will, however, make dancing ornaments and weapons and headdresses which again lie close to the spirit realm. (I have quoted Waddell's statistical evidence for these tendencies in Table 18.)

How did culture change influence the division of labour between the sexes? For the traditional productive activities, there has probably been hardly any change. I have quoted a table of exclusively masculine and feminine activities collected by Williams in 1923, and hitherto unpublished (Table 19). Certain tasks of importance were omitted from this list, which may explain why Williams did not publish it. Sago making was probably always a male activity; so was the use of the digging stick preparatory to planting taro and yam. The harvesting of taro was probably always a specifically feminine task; there is clearly a taboo on men against harvesting taro. Even bachelors never do it but must leave it to his mother, his sister or his brother's wife. If men did it, I was told, they would not "know how" and they would never manage to eke out the crop until the next harvest. This did not apply to the harvesting of other crops. When Williams classified "planting" as a feminine task, he was probably thinking of the actual placing of the cuttings in the ground, though I have seen men as well as women do this.

In the Orokaiva view both men and women are repositories of capacities and resources specific to themselves; the relationship between men and woman is the giving of exchange (wine ari) of the contributions of each. Men views woman as an equal exchange partner and this equality is real even though the care over legal and political matters is a distinctively masculine contribution. In the new activities introduced since European contact the same balance is preserved. Some new duties (e.g., the washing of clothes) were added to the specifically feminine preserve, church work and the purchasing of goods became a predominantly masculine preserve (as is attested by Waddell's statistics). The harvesting of rubber, taught exclusively to men on the plantations, became an exclusively male activity. On the other hand, the bulk of cash producing activities (working for pay, maintaining, harvesting and processing of coffee) were shared.

One interesting observation made by Waddell and confirmed by me is that most marketing of subsistence crops is done by the women whereas marketing of coffee is done by the men. The handling of harvested crops is normally a woman's prerogative. These are normally carried in large string bags which only married women can own and hang over their heads. While the casual European observer supposes that the women carrying these large bags are reduced to the status of beasts of burden, these bags signify the women's exlusive power over the crop; the fuller they are, the prouder the women are of them. Thus, only

A,B [See Cat. 116, pp. 225, 226, respectively--Analyst]